

City of Cambridge Recycling Advisory Committee  
**Informative meeting about the Bottle Bill**  
**with Representative Alice Wolf and Phil Sego, Sierra Club**  
April 26, 2005

Members Present:

Rob Gogan, Cathy McCormick, Adam Mitchell, Judy Nathans, Robert Winters

Guests Present:

Justin Adams, Mark Fournier, Randi Mail, Lisa Peterson, Phil Sego, Ellen Watson, Representative Alice Wolf

Cathy McCormick Chairing

- Intros
- RAC meets monthly, recently discussed BB and wanted to hear from Rep Wolf about this complex issue and update RAC on her opinion – educational forum

Alice Wolf

- helped started recycling in Cambridge – view on UBB: if all these drinks were popular when bill was first created, we wouldn't have this discussion... this is the natural course b/c drinks have changed: that's the fundamental way she looks @ issue – litter: need to keep roads and squares clean
- UBB: 26 cosponsors, 2 Cambridge reps – Toomey & Martha Walls (?) – referred to Natural Resources Committee and hearing 7/24 – better venue than Energy to get it passed b/c of leadership support – 15 bills to be heard same day
- timetable? Bill will be “under consideration” b/c so many issues and it may not come out of committee til fall unless that work is done ahead of time – presumes it will be debated
- 1379 primary bill – filed in both House and Senate
- 1677: JN this would establish CEF – Alice wants it clear that she does not want this bill to generate more money to go to general fund

Phil Sego

- BB passed 3<sup>rd</sup> year after introduced and excluded water, juices, sports drinks, liquor: 1/3 of all bottles (doesn't include 1.7 liter)
- Now UBB would exclude milk and medicine containers
- Increase handling fee from 2.25 cents to 3 cents
- Exemptions allowed in many circumstances – AM: how many places exempt? Done by application and must show that there's a nearby facility to accept/process – and signs required directly consumers where to take them – no idea how many exemption applications – administration will be DEP Bottle Bill Division – not sure if it will be annual exemption
- 50% INCREASE IN VOLUME... tons?
- Focus on PET – 99% petroleum... less than 20% recycled now... recycled use is mostly carpet – recycle PET institute constantly talking about recycling rates lacking for the material

- Finland recycles 96% at high end, MA is typical at 70%
- RG: why not milk it's a growing market segment: PS: milk seen as a health beverage and Sierra Club doesn't want to discourage health habits
- UBB filed for 8-9 years
- AM: consumer gripe that machines are down at stores
- Machine operators: TAWNA and RIPCRA (?)
- Can a supermarket be a little stores alternative redemption center? PS: not legit – both parties must agree to specific containers accepted

1. Affect restaurants? Will it be easier? Won't this involve more separation and handling?

REDEEMING BOTTLES NOT MANDATORY. YES MORE SEPARATION, UNLESS THEY CHOSE TO JUST RECYCLE IT. MA IS HIGHEST % OF REFILLED BOTTLES IN US – WHICH NEEDS TO BE SORTED BY MANUFACTURERS. RW: why is this handling “divorced” from mrf? AM: doesn't think any MA mrf has ever had a redemption system.

2. What would you say to the Citizens for Limited Taxation, who might describe the state's seizure of the Clean Environment Fund (unclaimed nickel deposits) the past few years as misallocation of the funds intended to promote recycling? What safeguards could be put into Expanded Bottle Bill to prevent this misallocation of funds from happening?

CEF: COALITION TO UBB DOESN'T HAVE POSITION ON REESTABLISHING CEF...B/C LEGISLATION NEEDS TO COME FROM ORGANIZATIONS THAT GET MONEY. WHEN THAT HAPPENED ALL DEDICATED FUNDS WERE ELIMINATED AND MA WAS IN NEED OF \$\$\$. DIDN'T MATTER THAT FUNDS FROM CEF WERE NOT TAKEN FROM BUDGET. ALICE THINKS IT'S A SEPARATE ISSUE AND WOULD HAPPY TO SEE IT REESTABLISHED... ATTACHING IT TO THIS BILL IS NOT RIGHT WAY TO HANDLE... WHAT'S THE STRATEGY – SHE HASN'T THOUGHT IT THROUGH? BUDGETS STILL TIGHT IS WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL THIS YEAR

GRANTS TO REDEMPTION CENTERS – They lose \$\$ and need increased handling fee... lobbyist same for redemption centers and grocery stores

MF: not smart to put through UBB and not funnel money back into CEF or education/infrastructure to support these initiatives... ALICE suggested to come and testify to that point and maybe committee will decide to include it

AM: use UBB funds to focus on largest portion of the waste stream: fibers

Current system discourages redemption b/c with every redemption, it costs the redemption centers \$\$

New Jersey has 'Litter Tax" everyone who contributes to litter has to pay 1/100 of 1% of their profits (?) AND THIS adds up to \$30mil – ends up as a \$30K grant to municipalities

RG: concerned that bill focuses on changing phenomena... trend toward single stream... thinks UBB will be obsolete as soon as its passed... FCR just invested \$500K in better PET processing... manufacturers will put products in exempt packaging

3. What would you say to a Cambridge property owner, whose taxes already pay for municipal collection of cans & bottles for recycling? Deposit (5 cents) plus handling fee (2.25 cents) plus bottler's process fee (3-5 cents) seems like double taxation. Expanding to new materials only extends the injustice.
4. What the bill will do to Redemption Centers like E&C Bottle and Can Return on Webster Ave? Will the 4-cent return vs. 5-cent debate be resolved? Will more redemption centers emerge?

Alice: how does Cambridge pay for recycling? We lost \$100K in grants, the budget funded by property taxes, \$100K from revenues... wanted to know whether collection costs were a flat fee? Believed that UBB would reduce costs for recycling

5. Won't many small stores without crushing machines for returns be frustrated with the higher volume?

Can the vending companies contracted to put water and soda machines in T stations be forced to provide a container for recycling to address litter?